Delegates,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization at MUNUC XXXI. I am Alexander Azar and will be your committee chair. I am looking forward to getting to know all of you in February.

I am a second year at the University of Chicago, and I am also from Chicago. I am doing a double major in Math and Public Policy. On campus, I am involved with MUNUC and serve as the vice-president of my house. Outside the realm of school, I write fashion articles for a menswear website (Grailed) and a store in Chicago (Gallery Aesthete). My other passions include listening to Rap & R&B. I really love Lauryn Hill, Frank Ocean, Erykah Badu, and Kendrick Lamar, and I’m more than happy to have a conversation with you about Hip-Hop.

As representatives of UNESCO, you will have the opportunity to discuss two very important cultural and educational issues and their intersection with identity politics. One topic, the global treatment of indigenous peoples, is incredibly important for understanding the plight of indigenous groups across the world. The topic deals with the lasting effects of colonialism. The other topic, women’s education, deals with how the disenfranchisement of women has resulted in major disparities between educational and financial achievement between men and women.

As you prepare for conference, don’t hesitate to contact me with any questions you might have. I would be happy to answer any questions about the committee, the upcoming conference, MUNUC in general, or the University of Chicago.

I hope to make MUNUC 31 a wonderful conference for all of you. See you in February!

Best,

Alexander Azar
COMMITTEE HISTORY

The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, also referred to as UNESCO, was founded in 1945 after World War II. The goal of UNESCO was to build peace by sharing education, science, and culture throughout the world. Over the past seventy years, UNESCO has done substantial work towards its goal, most notably by creating the UNESCO World Heritage Sites. UNESCO now consists of 195 member states, and 10 associate states. Despite much of the work UNESCO has done with regards to globalization and preservation of culture, isolationism is currently on the rise. It is more important than ever for UNESCO to build educational, scientific, and cultural dialogues between nations.
TOPIC A: THE GLOBAL TREATMENT OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Statement of the Problem

Introduction to the Topic

The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is a specialized agency of the UN dedicated to preservation and growth of these three areas across the globe. The organization is often recognized for their classification and conservation of World Heritage Sites. The main goal of the organization is, “to build peace through international cooperation in Education, the Sciences and Culture,” and under this mission the agency takes many actions through various outlets to address its goals. This committee will be tasked with looking at the global treatment of indigenous peoples. This topic is of special importance to UNESCO as indigenous peoples and their cultures and knowledge are under threat by many parts of global society.

Indigenous People are defined as people whose ancestors were the original inhabitants of a region, as opposed to people who moved to that region at a later time. Hence, there are people who are indigenous to every region. However, indigenous people all across the world have different cultures, languages, and means of living. Thus, state governments – which are often formed by non-indigenous peoples – have different ways of treating their indigenous populations. For these reasons, it is very difficult to generalize the world's indigenous populations, and also difficult to generalize the shared problems they face.

According to the 2010 UN Report State of the World’s Indigenous Peoples, there are over 370 million indigenous people in the world, roughly five percent of the world’s population. This 370 million people make up over five thousand vastly different cultures, with many different languages. Depending on the region of the world, groups of indigenous peoples face many more health problems, suffer socio-economically, and generally have a lower life expectancy than their non-native counterparts. While some governments have made attempts to ameliorate these problems, for the most part, the efforts have fallen short.

Another reason why it is difficult to address the issues faced by indigenous peoples is because it is difficult to create a universal definition of indigenous peoples. Many people are considered

3 Ibid,
indigenous or non-indigenous by the UN, but that is not uniformly accepted globally. The UN working definition of indigenous peoples stands as: “The descendants of those who inhabited a country or a geographical region at the time when people of different cultures or ethnic origins arrived.” However, many governments have difficulty identifying their indigenous populations, so these people often do not receive the same citizenship status as their non-native peers. These issues have been relevant since the beginning of colonization in the 16th century, and remain incredibly important to modern day society.

**Historical Background**

The major issues facing indigenous peoples are heavily tied to colonization, conquering, settling, and occupation. In the fifteenth century, Spain and Portugal led “The Age of Discovery,” which was simply the mass colonization of the “unknown” world. In the Spanish “discovery” of continental America, the Spanish began oppressing the native people, forcing them into labor and oftentimes murdering them. When more settlements and colonies began arising in the continental Americas, the living situations became worse. The Europeans brought over diseases and weapons that ultimately killed a large portion of the indigenous population of the continent.

---

This trend continued in subsequent years, and Europeans continued to search for more colonies. In the 17th century, the British made their way to Australia, and over the span of the next 200 years, the colonized Australia for themselves – taking away the ownership of the continent from the people who lived there for over sixty thousand years. This became a pattern in colonization, as it was very common for European countries to enter a region and claim it as their own. This colonization ultimately created many long-term problems, as there are many indigenous groups that are fighting to receive their land back. The unfair treatment of indigenous peoples continued for many years following colonization – and is arguably continued in modern times – which have led to many large issues that this committee must address.

**Socioeconomic Status**

Across the globe, Indigenous peoples suffer from disproportionately high rates of poverty. While indigenous peoples only make up five percent of the global population, they constitute over one third of the world’s 900 million extremely poor rural people. Furthermore, over fifteen percent of the world’s poor people are indigenous. This is not only a problem in developing nations; The financial state of indigenous peoples has remained fairly stagnant over the past thirty years in both developed and developing nations.

The roots of the financial problems of indigenous peoples are numerous. The most obvious reason was that the land of indigenous people’s was taken away from their ancestors many years ago without compensation. The land that was taken was often home to many natural resources, and was typically used for agriculture and housing as well. While countries recently have given back land as reparations to their indigenous peoples, indigenous families did not have the opportunity to use their land for many years, creating cycles of poverty.

The socioeconomic status of indigenous peoples is also heavily tied to educational access and workplace discrimination, which describes unjust and prejudicial treatment. Indigenous students often do not have access to as many quality public educational institutions and their non-indigenous peers. Furthermore, many of these schools do not cater any part of their

---

5 Spooner, N. A. “Human Occupation at Jinmium, Northern Australia: 116,000 Years Ago or Much Less?” Antiquity 72, no. 275 (1998): 173-78. doi:10.1017/s0003598x00086361,
8 Ibid,
9 Ibid,
10 Ibid,
12 Ibid,
13 Ibid,
educational curriculum around indigenous customs or languages, causing indigenous students to perform relatively poorly compared to non-indigenous students.\textsuperscript{15} Even after they finish their schooling, many indigenous people searching for employment face discrimination when applying for jobs. It is also very common for indigenous workers to face discrimination at work, not only in the form of harassment, but oftentimes by receiving less pay than their coworkers.\textsuperscript{16}

Indigenous families’ ancestors often had their land stolen from them by the government. While there have been some efforts to return this land by certain countries, many indigenous communities have not received their ancestors’ land back. Furthermore, many reservations, which are lands set aside by governments for indigenous populations to live on, are in arbitrary locations that were not where the indigenous peoples originally settled.\textsuperscript{17} In these cases, the land that was given back does not hold nearly as much value or agricultural viability as the land that was taken.\textsuperscript{18} As a committee, we will look at how land claims are managed on an international level.

Health and Well Being

Indigenous peoples are oftentimes in much worse health than non-indigenous peoples. In Australia, the life expectancy of an indigenous child is on average twenty years less than his or her non-native compatriot.\textsuperscript{19} This same statistic is true for indigenous children in Nepal. In Guatemala, an indigenous child’s lifespan is thirteen years shorter than a non-native child, and in New Zealand it is eleven years shorter.\textsuperscript{20} According to the UN document \textit{State of the World’s Indigenous Peoples}, these statistics occur because of, “poor nutrition, limited access to care, lack of resources crucial to maintaining health and well-being and contamination of natural resources.”\textsuperscript{21}

One major health problem for indigenous peoples is diabetes. Over fifty percent of indigenous adults worldwide suffer from type two diabetes, which is a large indicator of poor nutrition.\textsuperscript{22} Because indigenous peoples tend to have fewer financial resources than their peers, they often resort to purchasing cheap – but unhealthy – food, which is also fed to their children.\textsuperscript{23} Furthermore, many of these communities have only recently been introduced to western junk

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid,  
\textsuperscript{18} Ibid,  
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid,  
\textsuperscript{21} Ibid,  
\textsuperscript{23} Ibid,
food, which can be very chemically addicting. For these reasons, indigenous people often have a very unhealthy diet, which is a big factor in their shorter life expectancy.

One issue that greatly affects indigenous populations is addiction to harmful products such as alcohol and tobacco. One big reason alcoholism is dominant in indigenous communities is because of lack of access to these products in previous generations. Another argument for its use is because of financial stress in these communities. There is also a thought that the dangers of products such as tobacco and alcohol are not as well known in certain indigenous communities as it is elsewhere in the world. Hence, public awareness campaigns about the dangers of these products may be quite helpful. In addition, ensuring indigenous people searching for rehabilitation have access to it is of the utmost priority.

Indigenous health is also a complex issue, because many indigenous communities rely on multiple forms of medicine. For example, while western medicine is a priority within the communities, mental and societal health can often be dependent on traditional health. In a study conducted by the World Health Organization, it was discovered that over 80% of the world’s indigenous population relies on traditional medicine in addition to western medicine. Hence, while it is important to provide modern health services to worldwide indigenous communities, the committee should also look to ensuring that traditional health services are also recognized and valued as important and meaningful methods of medical treatment.

Cultural Preservation

Cultural preservation is one of the largest elements of the mission of UNESCO. One of the primary reasons this organization hopes to address the plight of indigenous peoples is to ensure the longevity of their cultures. Indigenous communities around the world have seen a fast deterioration of their cultures and customs because of western influence. Indigenous culture is often tied to their land, and the destruction of indigenous land has resulted in the vanishing of many indigenous traditions. Furthermore, the introduction of western culture into indigenous communities oftentimes leads to the indigenous culture being overshadowed, as it

---

24 Ibid,
26 Ibid,
27 Ibid,
30 Ibid,
is easier for the native-people to assimilate to the societal culture.\textsuperscript{31} Much of this assimilation includes adopting the national language, which leads to a loss of indigenous languages.\textsuperscript{32}

According to the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs’ Division for Inclusive Social Development of Indigenous Peoples, 90\% of all indigenous languages will disappear within the next one hundred years.\textsuperscript{33} There are thousands of indigenous languages that currently run the risk of \textbf{extinction}, or disappearing from the world, if nothing is done to preserve them. This typically occurs because the languages are not formally documented, and when they are not passed down through generations, they disappear. Because language is often related to culture and religion, many indigenous cultures also face extinction as their languages become extinct. As UNESCO, we will be tasked with ensuring that these customs and languages remain throughout the world.

One of the guiding principles of UNESCO is how important it is to share culture in order to build peace. Cultural awareness is often used as a method of peace-building and deters discrimination by allowing people to understand distinctly human elements of a group.\textsuperscript{34} While building peace may sound vague and slightly outdated, peace is not solely a lack of violence between groups, but it implies genuine compassion between groups as well. This is often linked to successful sustainable development, and equitable progress amongst minority groups.\textsuperscript{35} Hence, cultural preservation and recognition is vital in creating progress for indigenous groups.

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{32} ibid;
\textsuperscript{33} ibid;
\textsuperscript{35} ibid;
\end{flushleft}
History of the Problem

The root of the problems facing indigenous people come from a long-term global history of colonialism. Colonialism is the practice of acquiring partial or full control of land from one country.\textsuperscript{36} Furthermore, colonialism tends to also imply that the country that is acquiring the land takes advantage of the country they are occupying financially. Historically, global expansion was incredibly important for paving the roadmap to our modern day borders we draw between countries. Unfortunately, much of this global expansion was done recklessly, and the people who took over other lands oftentimes depleted the land of their resources. Furthermore, many people whose native land was taken by a colonialist power were forced into bonded labor. In this section, we will examine specifically how this history of colonialism and the mistreatment of indigenous people has continued throughout history.

Before the formal historical period of colonialism, there were other events similar to our modern definition of colonialism. In 250 AD, the Greeks had referenced native peoples who used to live in the land in some classic literature.\textsuperscript{37} The Greeks referred to these people as barbarians, and would often write about killing them.\textsuperscript{38} These people were also referred to as Pelasgians, which was used to belittle the importance of those people. When the ancient Greeks first came to Greece, they removed most of the Pelasgians who were living there, and Greco society flourished.\textsuperscript{39} This created a pathway for how indigenous people were treated after that. Indigenous people throughout history have had their land taken from them, been viewed as barbaric, and were often at threat to be forced into labor.

While within Greece, the Greeks treated the indigenous population poorly, and they were also extremely terrible to indigenous populations outside Greece, such as the Metanapos from Italy.\textsuperscript{40} A big portion of this was because of racial differences between the populations. The racial differences of other indigenous peoples and the Greeks allowed for there to be a general dissociation between the two groups.\textsuperscript{41} This othering of the outside groups is what led to the Greek control of lands that were native to another group. Race still plays a very large role within the treatment of indigenous peoples today. Many indigenous groups of have been considered largely irrelevant within the context of citizens and decision makers within global history.


\textsuperscript{38} Ibid,

\textsuperscript{39} Ibid,

\textsuperscript{40} Ibid,

\textsuperscript{41} “Ancient Man and His First Civilizations.” \textit{Ancient Americas Cultural and Racial Affinities with Africa}, realhistoryww.com/ world_history/ancient/Minoan_Greece_1a.htm,
Colonialism officially describes the period of time which began with the “Age of Discovery.” The Age of Discovery was a time in which Spain and Portugal began exploring what they referred to as “the Unknown World.” In 1492 Christopher Columbus was tasked with finding a boat path from Western Europe to Asia. Columbus instead went to North America, and Spain quickly began exploiting America for its natural resources. Columbus and subsequent explorers quickly enslaved the indigenous people (who were referred to as Indians). Within the next hundred years, there were twelve European nations which successfully had a colony in the Americas. Germany and Italy also tried to colonize part of the region, but were not successful. The natives who lived on the land before the colonizers were often removed from their land to small pockets of non-fertile land. Furthermore, many of these natives were also enslaved. One of the biggest offenders of colonization by the 1700s was England.

The first British explorers arrived in Australia in 1606. Within the next one hundred and fifty years, things remained relatively stagnant. That is until in 1788, when England sent its first fleet of ships to Australia to establish a penal colony. Doing this, they kicked out many natives on the coastal land and set up their prisons. Over the next hundred years, more colonies were built, and England began depleting Australia of its natural resources. A gold rush resulted in Australia losing a lot of its natural resources, but brought a lot of profit over to England. The indigenous population of Australia, known as the Aboriginal people, were constantly relocated by the British, and the community diminished quickly. Many Aboriginal Australians died from new diseases that were brought over by the British fleets and way of life. Currently, Australia’s indigenous population still suffers many of the harsh consequences that are a result of British colonialism.

The British were also known for colonizing India. While India was constantly under colonialist pressure since halfway through the sixteenth century, it was never fully occupied by any one European country. That is, up until the end of the eighteenth century, when England took control over India from France, and expelled them from the country. By the middle of the nineteenth century, England had a nearly full control over all of India. England then created a system in which all the wealthy people in India were British, as there were a few who ruled over many. This system was finally removed after World War II with the independence of India and Pakistan, but the influence of colonialism on India has yet to leave.

Much of continental Africa has also been imperialized by European countries. As a result the fall of the Ottoman Empire, the French began colonizing much of North Africa in the 1850s. Eventually,
the French maintained control over the Northern and Western parts of the continent. Over the
next fifty years, the main goal of the French was taking control of as much land as possible.\textsuperscript{48} It was not until the 1900s that the French attempted to bring any economic development to the
governments and land that they took control of. Nonetheless, the French were still consistently
taking natural resources from many of the people from the areas within North and West Africa.\textsuperscript{49} While the French have eventually gotten rid of their colonies, much of the region is still run under the same imposed outside influence.

During a similar time frame, England began colonizing the southern region of Africa. England
defeated the colonies within Southern Africa in 1910, and formed the Union of South Africa.\textsuperscript{50} In 1913, the new British ruled government passed the Native Land Act, which gave 7% of all arable land to Africans, while white people took the rest of the land. Seeing as white people only consisted of 20% of the South African population, and Africans were 80% of the population, this policy was extremely unfair.\textsuperscript{51} Ultimately, it resulted in the non-native South Africans taking most of the land that has been owned by South African families for years.

One of the most important consequences of colonialism that occurred within continental Africa was the English Apartheid system. Apartheid officially began in 1948, but one could argue that it has been prominent in South Africa since its British colonization. Apartheid means separation, and the policies it put in place were quite well reflected in the name.\textsuperscript{52} Not only were white people segregated from non-whites, but tribes were separated from each other to remove their political power.\textsuperscript{53} The indigenous South Africans lost any form of representation they had, and the Apartheid system was law up until 1994.\textsuperscript{54} Nonetheless, while the Apartheid system is now illegal, the indigenous groups in South Africa are still treated incredibly poorly.

The United States also has an incredibly long and troubled history of its treatment of native peoples. After separating from England, the United States was established on land that previously belonged to many native tribes. The government dealt with this by constantly relocating native Americans across the country, into far and non-fertile lands. Usually, this meant sending the indigenous Americans westward.\textsuperscript{55} By the nineteenth century, after the United States had expanded into the west, there was not a concrete place to dislocate the natives. The United States then developed the policy of reservation, in which they found non-fertile land that was far

\textsuperscript{48} “French in West Africa.” Edited by Ali Bar, French in West Africa, www.africa.upenn.edu/K-12/French_16178.html,
\textsuperscript{49} Ibid,
\textsuperscript{51} Ibid,
\textsuperscript{53} Ibid,
\textsuperscript{54} Ibid,
from any major cities, and provided that land for the Native Americans to live on.\textsuperscript{56} This further isolated Native Americans from the rest of the American citizens.

In the early parts of the twentieth century, the United States made efforts to improve the problem by addressing the educational system for Native American children. Many kids were given grants to attain scholarships at boarding schools.\textsuperscript{57} However, these boarding schools separated indigenous children from their parents, creating a loss of indigenous culture within their communities.\textsuperscript{58} Furthermore, the economic divide between indigenous and non-indigenous people still lingered, as there were not many programs granted to Native Americans which would provide them jobs.\textsuperscript{59} While there have been attempts to create job opportunities for indigenous peoples, employer bias has still lingered, disrupting those attempts.\textsuperscript{60}

The problems that face indigenous communities stem from colonialism, and the global historical treatment of indigenous peoples. The issues facing indigenous communities are often tied to race, as well as negative stereotypes that exist about the communities. The history of abuse and control over indigenous peoples creates a mindset in which people are fine ignoring the problems these communities face. However, it is the goal of this committee to look back on the troubled history of colonialism, and see how we can amend our laws to ameliorate the situation.

\textsuperscript{56} “Native American Treatment.” Powered by Blogs @ Baylor University, blogs.baylor.edu/nativeamericanntreatment/
\textsuperscript{57} Ibid,
\textsuperscript{58} Ibid,
\textsuperscript{59} Ibid,
\textsuperscript{60} Ibid,
Past Actions

Although people throughout history have always asked the question of how to treat indigenous peoples, the UN did not take any direct action to address the situation until 1982. That year, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) established “The Working Group on Indigenous People”. The goal of this working group was to create a set of guidelines that would serve as minimum standards for how indigenous peoples should be treated by their governments. The Working Group was created as a result of a study by José B. Martínez Cobo, which discussed the dramatic global oppression of indigenous peoples.

The Working Group was tasked with addressing the global oppression of indigenous peoples. In 1994, they submitted a first draft version of the Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, a document that outlined the basic human rights of indigenous people. After being reviewed by a few committees, the declaration was presented to ECOSOC and the UN General Assembly. The process for the declaration to be signed by countries took a very long time, as many nations had difficulties with all the rights it suggested indigenous people should have. The main nations in opposition to the legislation were Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United States.

By 2007, the final version of the document was being considered by the General Assembly. In one of the preambles, the Declaration stated, “Affirming that indigenous peoples are equal to all other peoples, while recognizing the right of all peoples to be different, to consider themselves different, and to be respected as such.” Much of the document was focused around ensuring that indigenous peoples would be treated as equals, while still allowing them to preserve their culture. The Declaration also mentioned indigenous people’s inherent right to derive, “their political, economic, and social structures,” which are often related to their traditions, history, philosophy, and land.

The Declaration of Rights of Indigenous Peoples contains forty-six articles, most of which emphasize general rights that indigenous peoples are guaranteed. Article 32, part 1, stated, “Indigenous peoples have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for the development or use of their lands or territories and other resources.” This article isolated other

---

62 Ibid,
63 Ibid,
64 Ibid,
65 Ibid,
66 Ibid,
68 Ibid,
69 Ibid,
countries that were worried about having to return land to their national indigenous population. Later in the article, it clarified what countries were allowed to do on indigenous land. Article 22, part 1, states that particular attention should be paid to the, “needs of indigenous elders, women, youth, children and persons with disabilities.” This Declaration paid strong attention to the rights of indigenous peoples, but there are few actionable solutions in the document.

On September 13\textsuperscript{th} 2007, the Declaration of Rights of Indigenous Peoples was adopted by 144 states. There were four votes against the legislation from Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United States.\textsuperscript{71} There were also eleven nations that abstained from the Declaration. Nonetheless, in April of 2009, during the Durban Review Conference, 182 states from all around the world agreed upon the adoption of the Declaration. These states included the four that voted against the Declaration only two years earlier.\textsuperscript{72}

Over the next five years, the Declaration did not make many significant changes in the lives of indigenous peoples.\textsuperscript{73} In 2014, during the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples, the member states were tasked with creating an action plan to achieve the goals set in the UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. In over a year and a half, after much consultation with indigenous groups, member states at the conference devised the System-wide Action Plan (SWAP), which was shared at the UN Chief Executives Board meeting in 2015.\textsuperscript{74}

The SWAP consists of a few main ways of improving the lives of indigenous peoples across the globe. The first part of the plan is to conduct a high-level awareness-raising initiative. The awareness campaign was meant to spread information about how indigenous peoples are treated on a global level.\textsuperscript{75} Another part of SWAP was supporting nations financially with the, “reform and implementation of legal frameworks, policies, strategies and plans to further the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.” SWAP also encouraged the creation of programming and other initiatives to raise funds for programs meant to help indigenous peoples. While SWAP has ultimately made some improvements to the situation, the problems that have plagued indigenous communities for years have not come close to being erased.

\textsuperscript{70} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{72} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{74} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{76} Ibid.
Possible Solutions

Definitions and Identifying National Problems

In 2004, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs for the United Nations defined indigenous peoples as follows: "Indigenous communities, peoples and nations are those which, having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of the societies now prevailing on those territories, or parts of them." This varies from the simplified definition the UN created which was mentioned earlier in the background guide. This definition is useful as it emphasizes two of the main ideas behind helping indigenous communities. The first idea that it enlists is land reparations, and the second is the notion of indigenous communities considering themselves distinct from the larger government that is in control of much of the territory they reside on. Looking at and refining our global definitions of indigenous peoples and groups is the first way that UNESCO must address this issue.

One of the main issues targeting indigenous peoples is a lack of clear definitions around who qualifies for indigenous within individual countries. Many countries have programs for their indigenous communities, but the way the nation decides who qualifies as an indigenous person varies. While in some countries the indigenous population is defined by census data, it varies on a countrywide level. Furthermore, countries that use census data to see who qualifies as an indigenous person have certain percentages that make someone qualify as indigenous. Other nations have a process in which they allow people to self-identify as indigenous. It may be advantageous for UNESCO to encourage a more unified way of defining who counts as indigenous within a certain land.

Another potential solution is looking at how the problem varies on a national level. Many nations are not transparent with the state of how they treat their indigenous communities. Increasing this transparency would allow for UNESCO to gather more information on a global level, and may uncover issues indigenous communities face that are currently unknown by UNESCO. Another potential solution is for nations to communicate on aggregate levels based on region about their respective issues and resources. This could help nations address their unique problems head

79 Ibid,
80 Ibid,
81 Ibid,
on through more tailored ways. Through global communication and collaboration, UNESCO can help assist member nations in addressing the topic at hand.

**Land Reparations and Financial Situations**

Another incredibly important topic of debate around nations and their indigenous communities is how to address their **land reparations**, which describes a process by which indigenous groups are given back parts or all of the land taken away during colonization. This debate is often incredibly controversial, as many nations took billions of dollars worth of land from the natives when they first arrived to the country.\(^8\)

Because of this, many nations are not willing to give up much of the land that was taken from the natives, especially considering this land was often incredibly fertile, meaning that it held a lot of value throughout the time it was occupied by the colonizers and into the present day.\(^3\)

While UNESCO cannot infringe upon any nation’s sovereignty, the discussion of land reparations is incredibly important for each nation to address individually. Because of this, it may be difficult for UNESCO to directly affect the issue of land reparations, and the committee is thus advised to discuss their nation’s own beliefs on land reparations. While ideally nations that put forth a significant effort to work with native groups on returning stolen land would be given financial reparations, this may not be feasible for many countries economically. Meaning, if the committee creates a plan in which nations are given financial benefits if they give back a certain amount of land proportional to what they took from the natives who originally inhabited the land, the committee must also find a feasible way to pay for the plan.

In addition to struggles with land reparations, many indigenous people often face great financial difficulties for many reasons.\(^4\) One common reason is because of generational financial difficulties. Wealth is very regularly tied to the wealth of one’s family, so because of that, low-income individuals often come from low-income backgrounds. Looking back, one reason for the lack of generational wealth is because land was taken away from native individuals. Many indigenous families found themselves without land or job opportunities after the colonizers took control of their land.

Another reason indigenous communities face harsh financial situations is because of difficulties in job attainment and retention. Because of educational disparities between native and non-native communities, it is oftentimes difficult for indigenous peoples to get jobs in their nation.

---


\(^3\) Ibid.

Additionally, indigenous communities oftentimes face discrimination within the workplace, leading to difficulty in attaining work. This discrimination can also lead to difficulties in attaining a job in the first place.

According to the World Bank, while only 5% of the world’s population is indigenous, indigenous peoples make up over 15% of the world’s extreme poor.\(^85\) In order to improve the financial state of the world’s indigenous community, the World Bank recommends providing access to more jobs for indigenous peoples.\(^86\) Specifically, the World Bank has been working on a program in which more indigenous people will serve roles in governments, specifically working with national planning committees.\(^87\) Furthermore, ensuring that there are opportunities for indigenous peoples to be hired as educators will not only provide jobs for them, but will also share indigenous knowledge and culture across the world.

**Culture and Language Preservation**

One of the most important issues within this topic is ensuring that native languages are preserved throughout the world. Indigenous languages are currently under heavy threat, as many indigenous populations are losing their languages, since they are not passed on generationally.\(^88\) According to the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, “95 per cent of the world’s languages may become extinct or seriously endangered by the end of this century.”\(^89\) Because language is incredibly tied to culture, preserving indigenous languages will also help preserve their culture.

In order to preserve indigenous languages, the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues suggested two main paths of action. Firstly, it is important for indigenous peoples to work on a campaign that shows the importance of their languages to governments and policy-makers, as well as the general public.\(^90\) Furthermore, this campaign should also clear up misconceptions about indigenous languages. The second recommended solution was to establish a global fund that would be used to support indigenous languages.\(^91\) Of course, there are many other ways to support indigenous languages, and it is up to the committee to find the best courses of action to do so.


\(^{86}\) Ibid,

\(^{87}\) Ibid,


\(^{89}\) Ibid,

\(^{90}\) Ibid,

\(^{91}\) Ibid,
Supporting indigenous cultures is also a priority for this committee. A lot of indigenous cultures have been destroyed since the beginning of the sixteenth century due to colonialism and genocide. However, indigenous cultures are a priority for UNESCO, meaning the committee must find a way to assist in preserving indigenous cultures. One way to address this problem is by looking at cultural preservation and lingual preservation as complimentary towards each other. Another potential solution would be to create ways to share indigenous cultures with the general public. There is no clear-cut way to preserve cultures, so delegates should think creatively with regards to this process.

**Environment, Healthcare, and Women’s Issues**

According to the World Bank, “Indigenous Peoples are disproportionately vulnerable to the impacts of climate change since they often live in environmentally sensitive ecosystems.” Because many indigenous groups are more affected by environmental outcomes than non-native groups, indigenous communities should have more involvement with environmental preservation than they currently do. Furthermore, even though only 25% of all land in the world belongs to indigenous communities, indigenous land houses over 80% of the world's biodiversity. Because of this, there is a lot of scientific research that could be conducted on native land. However, indigenous people should have the right to refuse whether or not this research is conducted on their land.

Another large issue for indigenous communities is health and healthcare. On a global level, the average life expectancy of an indigenous person is lower than his or her non-native peer. This occurs for many reasons, but one reason indigenous populations tend have shorter life expectancies than non-indigenous populations is because of poor physical health. During the colonial era, when colonialist powers began integrating with indigenous populations, products such as tobacco and alcohol became extremely prevalent within these communities, and have remained there since. Indigenous populations also tend to have higher suicide rates and other mental health issues than non-indigenous populations. Many indigenous groups do not have access to healthcare, which also exacerbates these problems.

One issue that is often overlooked is the specific problems that indigenous women face. Indigenous women tend to have much lower educational levels than both non-indigenous women

---

94 Ibid
95 Ibid
97 Ibid
and indigenous men. Furthermore, indigenous women are much more likely to face gender-based violence in their lifetime than non-indigenous women. According to the UN, roughly one out of every three indigenous women are raped during their lifetime. Furthermore, in the United States, most of the perpetrators have been non-indigenous men. There are many problems which disproportionately hurt indigenous women more than indigenous men, and UNESCO cannot ignore these issues.

**Final Word**

The problems Indigenous communities face are multifaceted and heavily intertwined. For example, the taking away of land from indigenous communities not only destroyed a lot of indigenous culture, but also created financial stress that can be linked to poor health within certain communities. Hence, while UNESCO’s main goal is often perceived as being educational, the protection of human rights and the preservation of cultures is just as fundamental to the overall mission of the organization. Therefore, this committee must focus on finding far-reaching and sustainable solutions to the plights that indigenous communities have faced and continue to struggle with today.

99 Ibid.
100 Ibid,
Bloc Positions

Africa

There are estimated to be around 50 million indigenous people within continental Africa.\(^{101}\) Most of this population consists of nomadic peoples and hunter-gatherers.\(^{102}\) Because of this, much of the data on the indigenous populations within the region is unclear. The indigenous populations within the region have historically been ignored. The first legislation within the entire continent that adopted the promotion of indigenous rights occurred in 2010 in the Central African Republic.\(^{103}\) Nonetheless, many of these indigenous populations are often forced into assimilation into a society that took away their land and lead them into marginalization and poverty.\(^{104}\)

Indigenous populations within the region have a particularly large challenge accessing education. There exists a very large gap between the educational levels of indigenous and non-indigenous peoples, with primary school enrollment rates being particularly low for indigenous children.\(^{105}\) For example, in Cameroon, only 1.31 per cent of the indigenous Baka children within a certain district attended primary school.\(^{106}\) While many countries within the region struggle financially, it is imperative that there are more resources dedicated to education for indigenous children. Hence, deciphering the financial questions around the issue at hand is of the utmost importance for this bloc.

Arctic Nations

One of the largest populations of indigenous people in the world currently exists within the Arctic. There are eight countries that hold settlements in the Arctic: Canada, the United States, Russia, Finland, Sweden, Norway, Iceland, and Denmark.\(^{107}\) These settlements tend to hold the majority of the people living in the Arctic, with estimates stating that nearly two thirds of the Arctic population live in settlements.\(^{108}\) According to the Arctic Centre at the University of Lapland, over 10% of the living population within the Arctic is indigenous to the region, and there are over 40 different ethnic groups that live in the Arctic.\(^{109}\)


\(^{102}\) Ibid,

\(^{103}\) Ibid,

\(^{104}\) Ibid,

\(^{105}\) Ibid,

\(^{106}\) Ibid,


\(^{108}\) Ibid,

\(^{109}\) Ibid,
While the indigenous populations in this region tend to be very different, many have undergone substantial changes because of globalization and western standards. It is also worth noting that a significant proportion of indigenous land in the region has been destroyed because of recent changes. These changes include environmental damage caused by many Arctic nations. Furthermore, the industrialization of Arctic lands has also forced indigenous populations to leave their land. Climate change is one of the biggest threats for the indigenous populations in the region. Climate change has been detrimental to indigenous food harvesting, and severe weather has made hunting in the Arctic more dangerous. While the Arctic has proved to be a great financial resource for many nations, these nations must pay attention to how their actions affect the indigenous populations in the region.

**Asia**

According to the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, two thirds of the global indigenous population lives in Asia. While there are over 2,000 indigenous civilizations and languages in Asia, many indigenous people in the region have their cultural identity disregarded by other populations in the region. There is a large stigma in much of the continent that the indigenous groups are, "economically backward and primitive." However, since 1997 there has been some legislation passed that gives indigenous populations in Asia recognition. Nonetheless, there is still a large way for the Asian continent to go in order to protect their indigenous populations.

Financially, the indigenous populations in Asia have often struggled for a multitude of reasons. Many indigenous populations to date are still having their land taken away from them by governmental authorities. Furthermore, many indigenous people have difficulties finding work because of the negative stigma that surrounds them, as well as a lack of educational programs offered to indigenous populations. Indigenous women in particular often do not have access to education. Indigenous poverty also continues to grow, as many indigenous agricultural practices are being replaced. In addition, many other subsistence activities and jobs are being replaced, worsening the economic livelihoods of many indigenous people. Nonetheless, many Asian indigenous people have provided assistance to their government in combating climate change, and it is up the Asian nations to continue their work with their indigenous populations.

110 Ibid,
111 Ibid,
112 Ibid,
114 Report of the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples, James Anaya. Consultation on the situation of indigenous peoples in Asia, A/HRC/24/41/Add.3, para 6,
116 Ibid,
117 Ibid,
118 Ibid,
119 Ibid,
**Continental Americas**

Indigenous peoples are incredibly prominent throughout North, Central, and South America. In North America, indigenous populations tend to face many unfortunate realities. With regards to income in the United States, the average income of Native Americans is less than half that of the average U.S. income.\(^\text{120}\) In Canada, sixty percent of indigenous children live below the poverty line.\(^\text{121}\) Furthermore, around seventy percent of students who live on a reservation will not complete high school. This leads to a growth in unemployment rate for indigenous people, as the average indigenous unemployment rate has historically gone up while the national average unemployment rates have fallen.\(^\text{122}\)

Many indigenous issues are also very prominent within Central and South America. In these regions, indigenous poverty rates are over double the poverty rates of non-indigenous populations.\(^\text{123}\) Furthermore, many indigenous groups within these regions face grave discrimination, which has only hurt their economic opportunities. The removal of systematic discrimination from law codes within the region is incredibly important to improve the lives of indigenous people.\(^\text{124}\) The American bloc will also need to pay special attention to the issues indigenous women face, as indigenous women in these regions tend to face gender-based violence far more regularly than the non-indigenous women in the region.\(^\text{125}\) It may also be helpful to ensure that indigenous women are being involved in more political opportunities in the future.

**Europe**

Nearly all the indigenous people in Europe live in the northern parts of the continent: Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Russia.\(^\text{126}\) It is worth noting that all these countries are more aligned with the Arctic bloc than they are with the remainder of Europe. The non-Arctic countries in Europe at first glance appear to be unaffected by the issues indigenous populations face. However, many European countries were deeply involved with global colonization, which has greatly affected many indigenous groups. For that reason, European nations should be invested in ameliorating many of the problems they partially share the blame for. Furthermore, the financial status of

\(^{\text{121}}\) Ibid;
\(^{\text{122}}\) Ibid;
\(^{\text{124}}\) Ibid;
many of these nations will allow them to provide assistance to nations hoping to help their indigenous communities.

Within Europe, one of the most famous indigenous groups is the Basque people. There are over 2.4 million Basque people within Spain, and over 200,000 in France. The Basque population in both these countries are divided by people who believe that the Basque community should form their own country, and others who wish for the group to assimilate to their nation of residence. Many Basque people cite discrimination and cultural repression as a main reason that they hope to self-determinate. However, Spain and France do not wish to grant the land to the Basque people to form their own country. Ultimately, this situation brings rise to complexities of land rights and taxation of indigenous groups.

Oceania

Oceania is one of the most culturally diverse regions in the world. While only hosting a population of 6.5 million people, Papua New Guinea alone houses one-third of all the languages in the world (about 780 distinct languages). Because of how long it took for colonizers to reach Oceania, the region contains some of the most interesting ecological and cultural resources in the world. While only about 3% of the small population of Oceania is indigenous, the indigenous populations have seen great fluctuation since early colonization of the region. The pressures from globalization and western economies present a great danger towards the indigenous populations within the region.

The indigenous populations in Oceania, specifically within Australia, have struggled a lot over the past two hundred years. While there exists a stereotype that most indigenous Australians live in the Outback, most of the indigenous people actually live in or near a major city. Indigenous Australians, referred to as “Aboriginal peoples” often have serious health problems because of western influences on their lives, such as alcohol, tobacco, and fast food. Furthermore, Aboriginal peoples face much higher prison rates than their non-aboriginal peers. Aboriginal Australians also face tremendous economic hardship and other detrimental issues. It is of the utmost importance that Australians help their indigenous populations.

128 Ibid,
129 Ibid,
131 Ibid,
132 Ibid,
134 Ibid,
135 Ibid,
Glossary

**Aboriginal**: Aboriginal technically means existing in a land from the earliest of times. However, most indigenous people are not colloquially referred to as aboriginal. In fact, only native Australians and occasionally Canadians are referred to as aboriginal peoples.

**The Age Of Discovery**: The Age of Discovery was the period in which Europe began the mass colonization of territories unknown to Europe at the time. The Spanish were at the forefront of this time period, although countries such as France, England, and Portugal all heavily contributed as well.

**Apartheid**: Apartheid is the formerly legal racial separation of people in South Africa. Apartheid created a caste system in which people were ranked based on their race, and how close to being white they were.

**Culture**: The preservation of culture is incredibly important for this committee, so we must look to define culture within this context. Culture is a compilation of the traditions, art, and customs of a group of people.

**Colonization**: Colonization is the process in which one nation takes partial or full control of another nation. This control is usually governmental, although financial colonization occurs very regularly today.

**Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**: The Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples should be a guiding document for this committee. The declaration outlines what the basic human rights of any indigenous person should be.

**Discrimination**: The unjust treatment of a person or group of people based on a common identity trait. Discrimination against indigenous people is very common globally. Unfortunately, there are many negative stereotypes about indigenous people, implying that they are more primitive and less human than other people. While these stereotypes are both incredibly harmful and false, they persist.

**Extinction**: Extinction is the process of something disappearing from the world. For the context of UNESCO, languages and culture both run the risk of extinction.

**Indigenous Peoples**: Indigenous peoples are ethnic groups who are the original inhabitants of a given region before that region was colonized. Oftentimes, it is difficult to determine who is indigenous to a certain region, as there are no clearly documented records on these issues.
**Land Reparations:** Land Reparations is an action plan in which indigenous groups are given back part or all of the land that was taken from them by colonizers. Usually, when indigenous groups are given land back, they only receive a small portion of what was taken from them, and the land is usually less fertile than the territory that was taken from them.

**Language:** A method of communication, often spoken or written, that consists of words used to communicate agreed upon by convention. Languages are an integral part of culture, especially for indigenous groups. Oftentimes, it is very difficult to understand one’s culture if their language is not understood. Currently, many indigenous languages are facing extinction.

**Non-native:** Non-native is an adjective used to describe either people or things that came to a region through the process of colonization.

**Reservation:** Reservations are lands dedicated by governments where indigenous people live, specifically within North America.
Bibliography


“French in West Africa.” Edited by Ali Bar, French in West Africa, .africa.upenn.edu/K-12/French_16178.html,


“Native American Treatment.” Powered by Blogs @ Baylor University, blogs.baylor.edu/nativeamericanTreatment/,


Roberts-Wray, Kenneth. The Rise and Fall of the British Empire. University of Nottingham, 1970,

Spooner, N. A. “Human Occupation at Jinmium, Northern Australia: 116,000 Years Ago or Much Less?” Antiquity72, no. 275 (1998): 173-78. doi:10.1017/s0003598x00086361,


TOPIC B: EDUCATION OF WOMEN

Statement of the Problem

Introduction to the Topic

The main goal of the UNESCO is, “to build peace through international cooperation in Education, the Sciences and Culture.” As an organization, UNESCO believes that global peace cannot be attained without equality, thus gender-based educational equality is a major priority. Furthermore, the unequal treatment of over half of the worldwide population reduces universal productivity, and society loses potential scientific discoveries and cultural history. For these reasons, it is of the utmost priority that UNESCO addresses Women’s Education.

Across the world, oftentimes women have much less access to education and educational resources than their male peers. This holds true especially for higher educational opportunities. There are many reasons for why this occurs. One reason is deep-rooted sexism within many societies that shapes how parents treat their male and female children differently. Another reason this occurs is because women are often expected not to work outside the home when they are older, so boys are given priority when it comes to early childhood education. Furthermore, many countries still have discriminatory educational laws that allow for and sometimes encourage the education of boys over girls.

Educational disparities based on gender have a large effect on many other aspects of society. This is one primary reason – among many – for why women are often underrepresented within certain areas of the workforce. Women are oftentimes not granted the proper educational background to pursue political and financial careers at the same rate that men are. Furthermore, these disparities oftentimes end up forming in a cyclical nature. Since women are given fewer educational opportunities, they are not as well represented in the workforce as they could and should be. This leads many people to (unjustly) claim that women do not need higher education because they are not occupying as many high level jobs as men. Since educational and career successes are heavily tied together, it is of the utmost importance that women’s educational disparities are addressed quickly.

Education is a fundamental part of success in life, and success for society as a whole. Former Secretary General of the United Nations Ban-Ki Moon stated, “Education is a fundamental right

and the basis for progress in every country. Parents need information about health and nutrition if they are to give their children the start in life they deserve. Prosperous countries depend on skilled and educated workers.” He continued, “[with] wise investments in education, we can transform individual lives, national economies and our world.” Education is necessary for the transformations UNESCO would like to see in the world, and the best way this committee can improve global education is by starting with educating women at the same level as their male peers.

**Historical Background**

The fact that disparities exist within educational backgrounds of men and women, while horrific, is not surprising to many. Women around the globe have historically been granted fewer rights and privileges than men, and education has often been granted just to men. The reasoning behind this has often been that women were expected to take care of the household while their husbands were out working. Nonetheless, while many view these notions as demeaning and outdated, they have had a strong impact on childhood and higher education to date.

In 2,700 B.C. in Egypt, Merit Ptah became the first female doctor known to historians. Nonetheless, this was a very rare occurrence, as women were not given nearly the same educational opportunities as men. Fifteen hundred years later in Egypt, more women became literate and upper class women were educated fairly regularly. Within the next 1,200 years, wealthy women often received access to education in Rome and Greece. However, it was not until the Middle Ages that women were educated – even though it was only wealthy women, and they were educated at home. Up until the 17th century, women were not educated outside of the house. Their education within the home was usually based around learning household skills that were not applicable for any particular job.

By the 17th century, women received access to select boarding schools for women, in which they were taught writing, music, and needlework. Even so, it was not until 1841 that the first women in America received bachelor’s degrees. Nonetheless, women’s education was still highly limited, and women did not have close to equal treatment within the educational world.

---


140  ibid,

141  ibid,

142  ibid,

143  ibid,

144  ibid,

145  ibid,
Over the past couple decades, access to women’s education has improved, but there is still a long ways to go.

**Most Threatened Regions**

Women’s lack of education is a global problem. According to the One Campaign, a UN campaign dedicated to women’s education, there are over 130 million girls worldwide who do not have access to education. While there are many global discrepancies between education based on gender, the issues of lack of women’s education vary by region. For example, over 73% of young girls do not attend primary school in South Sudan. This is partially because South Sudan has a very small budget for education, and partially because women are often simply overlooked when it comes to education.

Out of the ten countries in which women have the least access to education, nine out of ten of them are in sub-Saharan Africa. This occurs for a few major reasons, and leads to a vast array of issues. Many of the nations on this list have very little budget room for public education, reducing

---

the likelihood that children (particularly female children) attend school. However, two countries on
the list, Ethiopia and Nigeria, spend a significant amount of their budget on education. Still,
because of extreme poverty and high child marriage rates (especially for women), young girls
oftentimes are denied any access to education.

The issues young women face in attaining an education are also heavily present within conflict
zones. For example, countries such as Somalia and Syria have difficulty reporting their statistics
on female education because of the conflicts within the region. Nonetheless, in these zones,
not only are there discrepancies between enrollment in school based on gender, but also class
attendance. Because families in conflict zones oftentimes are constantly on the move, young
female children are left to attend to the household while their parent or parents search for work.
It is important for committee members to consider how the issue of women’s education can
change depending on the region of focus.

**Early Education and Literacy**

One of the biggest target goals for this committee should be to improve access to early education
for women. Early education is especially important for women, as it is very difficult to attain
higher education and a moderate wage without early education. Additionally, early education
is essential for important life skills, such as literacy, general thinking, and social intelligence.
Furthermore, lingual skills and basic mathematics are necessary for everyday life.

Unfortunately, across the world, women have much less access to early education than men.
According to a report by UNESCO, fewer than 40% of countries in the world provide boys and
girls with equal access to education. Furthermore, within schools, young girls often struggle
due to issues of representation. In Liberia, women account for 13% of primary school teachers.
This ultimately becomes problematic, as women often do not have adequate educational
representation when young.

There are over 774 million illiterate adults in the world, and unfortunately, two-thirds of these
adults are women. Over the past twenty years, the ratio of illiterate men to women has not
changed, signifying stagnation within this metric of education equality. Furthermore, more
than three fifths of the world’s illiterate children are female, and this statistic has also been

---

147 Ibid,
international-womens-day-2014/women-ed-facts-and-figure/.
149 “International Women’s Day – Explore the Latest UIS Data with the EAtlas of Gender Inequality in Education.” UNESCO UIS.
data-eatlas-gender-inequality-education.
international-womens-day-2014/women-ed-facts-and-figure/.
151 Ibid,
stagnant for the past twenty years. Additionally, there are several countries in sub-Saharan Africa in which the female literacy rate is under 20%. With literacy being a necessary life skill and a strong indicator of one’s education, reducing these global illiteracy rates should be considered a high priority.

**Higher Education**

While access to early education for women is a large priority for this committee, higher education should also be greatly accessible to women. Higher education is shown to have a very great impact on the lives of young women. According to a study conducted by UNESCO, nearly 60% fewer girls would have children before they turned seventeen if every girl received a secondary education. Furthermore, over two thirds of all child marriages worldwide would end if all girls received access to secondary education. Secondary education is not simply a tool for preparing women for the workforce, but it is also necessary to help preserve their human rights.

Secondary education for women also provides assistance in creating gender equality within the workforce. While secondary education is not very common for women within poor regions of the world, this should not be the case. A recent study showed that women with a secondary education in Pakistan earn nearly 40% more than women with just a primary education. Another study conducted by UNESCO in Brazil stated that women with a secondary education are 20% more likely to find work than women with solely a primary education. The opportunities that women receive from a secondary education have been shown to be great all throughout the world. Therefore, it is essential that UNESCO look to provide as many women as possible with secondary educations.

College education can also be an incredibly useful tool for women in the workforce. However, globally there are many more men with college degrees than women. However, as time progresses, more and more women across the globe are enrolling in and graduating from college. Not only that, but in many developed nations, women are much more likely to complete their college degree upon enrolment than men. In Russia, nearly 98% of women who enroll in college will graduate while only 73% of men who enroll will graduate. Hence, providing

---

152 Ibid.,
153 Ibid.,
155 Ibid.,
156 Ibid.,
157 Ibid.,
159 Ibid.,
women with more opportunities to enroll in college will likely produce great returns. The more women who attend college, the more women will be represented in highly selective parts of the workforce.

**Women in the Workforce**

Women are underrepresented and underpaid in the workforce for a variety of reasons. While educational barriers are merely a part of the underlying sexism that women face in the workforce, they tend to play a **cyclical role**. This essentially means that women are often not offered training in fields such as business management, engineering, and medicine, and are not offered positions in these fields partially because they lack the training that their male counterparts have. This becomes cyclical because young women do not see other women in certain fields, making them less likely to try to enter those fields. Because of the cyclical nature of sexism within the workforce, UNESCO must look for a long-term solution to increasing **gender representation** within male-dominant fields.

While rates of female educational are on a general upward trend, that is not true for the rates of women in the workforce. Over the past 12 years, the percent of the global workforce that identifies as female has dropped by about 0.5%.\(^\text{161}\) While it is not a dramatically large drop, only 39.3% of the global workforce is female.\(^\text{162}\) The rate of women in the workforce today is nearly the same as it was in 1990, which demonstrates great stagnation.\(^\text{163}\) The global rate of women in the labor market has great potential to grow, as education is a very important prerequisite for many global jobs.

Not only is it more difficult for women to find jobs in the workforce, but even after attaining work, they also face other disadvantages. In 2015, the average earnings for a woman in the labor market were $11,000 while the average man in the labor market made nearly twice that.\(^\text{164}\) Furthermore, women are often confined to certain parts of the workforce. For example, over 60% of women in the world are employed in the service industry.\(^\text{165}\) Meanwhile, women currently occupy only 12% of board seats in the world.\(^\text{166}\) By confining women to certain jobs, they often receive less pay and have fewer opportunities to innovate.

\(^{162}\) Ibid,
\(^{163}\) Ibid,
\(^{165}\) Ibid,
\(^{166}\) Ibid,
History of the Problem

Throughout history, sexism has been a problem that has affected women through many different facets. While women have made many strides to gain rights that men are often entitled to, there is still a long way to go before gender equality can be achieved. Currently, women have attained the right to vote in nearly every country. Furthermore, by 1994, women made up the head of states of over ten countries worldwide. However, at the same time, there were over one hundred countries in which there were not any female members serving on national legislative bodies. In addition, there are still many countries in which women are not granted basic rights, such as leaving the house or creating a bank account without permission from a husband.

While women have made tremendous steps towards educational equality, there are still many educational disparities between men and women across the world. For example, women make up over two-thirds of the global population that drops out of school before fourth grade. This often occurs because of the historically engrained notion that women are supposed to take care of the house. Meaning, if something happens to the mother of a family, young girls are often pulled out of school to assume the mother’s former position. Furthermore, women consist of two-thirds of the world’s illiterate adults. In addition, even though more women are graduating from higher education programs each year, women make up over seventy percent of the world’s poor. Many of the issues women face are deeply rooted in history, stemming back from the first civilizations in the world.

Ancient Egyptian society is one of the first civilizations in the world, beginning over five thousand years ago. In Ancient Egypt, women and men received very different educations. Most men were educated until they were fourteen years old, and then they would begin working whatever job their father worked. The children of highly educated men would continue their education to also become highly educated, although this was a rarity. Meanwhile, most women had very dissimilar educational experiences. Most women trained to become good mothers and wives,
and were usually taught by their mothers.\textsuperscript{177} Very rarely, women could be trained to be dancers, entertainers, weavers, and bakers, as those were the only careers available to women.\textsuperscript{178} Noble and wealthy women were occasionally taught to read and write, although they did not use this education for work.\textsuperscript{179}

In most Ancient Chinese civilizations, women were not granted particularly different educational experiences than they were in Ancient Egypt. During the Shang and Chou Empires, women were not given any formal education. Rather, women were taught how to be good housewives by their mothers.\textsuperscript{180} During the Han Empire, education was free for all boys, but no girls were allowed to be educated.\textsuperscript{181} Even daughters of wealthy nobles were not educated, as it was believed it was a waste of time to educate women because their opinions did not matter.\textsuperscript{182} The Tang dynasty also did not allow for women to be educated, so they were told to strive to marry wealthy and have their own male children.\textsuperscript{183}

In Ancient Greece, women did have more educational opportunities than they had in Ancient China and Egypt. Nonetheless, from the ninth century B.C. to the fifth century A.D., women and men were still not granted remotely equal educational opportunities. Ancient Greece saw the development of many schools, although these schools were just for boys.\textsuperscript{184} For the most part, women remained in the house and were taught different household tasks by their mothers.\textsuperscript{185} However, some women were educated in preparation to join choruses.\textsuperscript{186} In order to sing in these choruses, the women must have been able to read, implying that there were women who were taught to read in Ancient Greece.\textsuperscript{187} Furthermore, there were women who were educated to read and write by their husbands and fathers, as women were not allowed in schools.\textsuperscript{188}

In Ancient Rome, women received similar educations to women in Ancient Greece. In Ancient Rome, education for boys was valued very highly, as most boys learned how to read, write, and do basic math.\textsuperscript{189} Very rarely, women from wealthy households were also taught these same skills at home, since they could not attend schools.\textsuperscript{190} For the most part, wealthy women were

\textsuperscript{177} Ibid,
\textsuperscript{178} Ibid,
\textsuperscript{179} Ibid,
\textsuperscript{181} Ibid,
\textsuperscript{182} Ibid,
\textsuperscript{183} Ibid,
\textsuperscript{185} Ibid,
\textsuperscript{186} Ibid,
\textsuperscript{187} Ibid,
\textsuperscript{188} Ibid,
\textsuperscript{190} Ibid,
taught about music, sewing, and running a kitchen.\textsuperscript{191} Because there was an expectation that women would not work outside the house, educating women was a low priority in ancient Rome.

What is often referred to as the Dark Ages because of its educational and artistic stagnation in Europe was actually a striving time period in the Islamic world.\textsuperscript{192} In the ninth century A.D., while Europe's influence was declining, the Islamic world was thriving. In 859, the University of Karueein was formed in Morocco – which is now the oldest university in the world.\textsuperscript{193} Furthermore, a Muslim woman, Fatima Al Fihri, founded it.\textsuperscript{194} In the early Islamic world, women received unprecedented education relative to any previous time period at any place in the rest of the world.\textsuperscript{195}

Throughout history, Islam has always emphasized education, as the Prophet Muhammad once stated, “Seeking knowledge is mandatory for all Muslims.”\textsuperscript{196} This statement did not discriminate based on gender, and educating women was a very high priority in the Islamic World. Women were not only taught within schools, but women were also teachers at schools.\textsuperscript{197} Women also played a large role in developing educational institutions. During the Ayyubid period of Damascus (1174 to 1260), there were twenty-six religious and educational institutions founded by women.\textsuperscript{198} As opposed to women in Europe, women in the Islamic world played a large role in education for many years.

During the Renaissance Era (14\textsuperscript{th} – 17\textsuperscript{th} century), there was a rise in women's education within Europe. However, because the medieval period had a strict ban on education for women, most European girls during the Renaissance Era were not educated.\textsuperscript{199} In Florence during the 1300s, some girls were allowed to attend school.\textsuperscript{200} Women from nobility were often required to read and write for certain obligations.\textsuperscript{201} Because of the Renaissance's emphasis on individual identity, by the late 1400s, many literate women began writing literature.\textsuperscript{202} At the beginning of the sixteenth century, female writers became somewhat common, and women were even able to deal directly with publishers themselves.\textsuperscript{203}

\textsuperscript{191} Ibid,
\textsuperscript{193} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{194} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{197} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{198} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{199} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{201} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{203} Ibid.
The rise of female authors led to the beginning stages of the modern feminist movement, as they were some of the first people to support gender equality. By the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, women also began to gain prominence within the arts. Many women wrote poetry, and women painters and illustrators began to gain notability within European societies. However, women were generally left out of most parts of the workforce, as they were still generally denied access to formal education. However, the Renaissance’s emergence of female authors and a newfound importance of queens allowed for women to be involved in important dialogues about women’s moral and intellectual capabilities.

The 18th century saw rise to discussions about women’s place in the world, specifically through the Enlightenment. Many progressive male thinkers believed that, while there were inherent differences in the capabilities of men and women, not educating women surely accentuated these differences. Because of these newfound ideas, women began creating more educational opportunities for themselves. On a rare basis, women who were born wealthy began to receive training to enter professions such as medicine and theology. The French Revolution in 1797 also led to more ideas in the modern feminist movement about how women should receive equal access to education as men. Nonetheless, while newfound progressive ideologies began circulating, women were still not close to receiving similar educational opportunities as men.

By the mid 1800s, women became more and more involved within the global educational sphere. Girls in America began regularly attending public schools, although at a lower rate than boys. Furthermore, women were often valued as educators within public schools. However, in the 1870s, American men still believed that women should not receive higher education, as even educated women were not to aspire for work. However, by the 1890s, women in both America and Europe saw more opportunities to attend college, and while it was a rarity, there were still many women who did.

By 1900, girls in advanced economies received access to education at 83% of the rate of boys. However, in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia, girls received education at less than 20% of the rate that boys did. By the 1930s, developed nations saw men and women receiving similar
educations up until adulthood. However, men were still much more likely to attain degrees in higher education, and women were often trained to become secretaries while men trained for more lucrative jobs. By the middle of the twentieth century, women across the world saw much more access to education, and women in Latin America and Eastern Europe were receiving education at over 80% of the rate as men. By 2000, every region in the world had women receiving education at a minimum of 75% of the rate as men.

By 1990, while women's education rates kept increasing, women made up less than 40% of the workforce worldwide. Furthermore, many lucrative professions were still very male dominant. While women were receiving education at similar rates to men, the historical implication that men work while women take care of the home spread to societies that claim to value gender equality. The topic of conversation has now shifted, not to whether or not women receive education (although it is still incredibly important), but rather what they receive their education in. Across the world, female education rates continue to climb, but there are still many disparities within education statistics for men and women.

One of the more recent stories that highlights current disparities between men’s and women’s education is the story of Malala Yousafzai. In 2008, Yousafzai was 11 years old when her hometown was taken over by the Taliban, who stripped her of her right to attend school. In 2012, Yousafzai spoke out on behalf of young women and their right to education, and she was shot in the head because of it, but survived. In 2014, after Yousafzai recovered from the attack, she continued to work on her goal of ensuring every girl in the world received access to education. In December of that year, she won the Nobel Peace Prize, and her foundation, “The Malala Fund,” has made significant strides in providing girls all across the world with access to a secondary education. Yousafzai’s story should be an inspiration to this committee about what can be accomplished, but also a reminder of the work that must been done.

Past Actions

Throughout history, women have faced discrimination in many ways beyond the right to access education. Women have historically been, and still often are, treated like second-class citizens in a world dominated by men. Women have been stripped of their rights to vote and own property, and their independence because of stereotypes that exist about women. For example, women have had a lot of difficulty attaining the right to vote, because there was (and still is) a belief that they were not as intelligent as men, so they would simply vote for whomever their husband or father tells them to vote for. Women have also had difficulty gaining independence because they are thought to not think rationally. These stereotypes about women stem from many misguided beliefs. However, ensuring women and men have equal access to education will hopefully negate many of these negative stereotypes about women.

While women have historically faced much discrimination, the UN has taken actions to eliminate some of this prejudice. In 1979, the UN General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). This convention is often viewed as the international Bill of Rights for women.222 The Convention defines what discrimination against women is, and gives countries suggestions on how to eliminate it.223 CEDAW also pays particular attention to the rights of women in the field of education.

In Article 10 of CEDAW, it states, “States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in order to ensure to them equal rights with men in the field of education.”224 The article dives deeper into the issue of equal education, saying women should have equal access to education from primary schooling all the way to professional and higher technical education.225 The article also discusses the importance of eliminating the different vocational education given to men and women, which often trains women for lower paying jobs than men.226 Furthermore, the document states the necessity of equity to create equality, specifically with regards to reducing the literacy gap between men and women. The final clause of the document states that both women and men should receive educational opportunities to understand how to take care of a family.227 Through this, Article 10 of CEDAW hopes to create gender equality through educational equality for all genders.

While CEDAW included ideals for a world with genuine gender equality, the results of the Convention were far from ideal. Over the next twenty years, while some progress was made,
women still were treated as second-class citizens in the international world. In 1995, during the Fourth World Conference on Women, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action was signed.\textsuperscript{228} This declaration identified 12 major issues that affect women, the second of which was the education and training of women.\textsuperscript{229} The document also noted how the issue of women’s education would affect women’s poverty, childhood marriage, and rights to vote and gain independence.

The section of the declaration about women’s education was tied to 6 main strategic objectives.\textsuperscript{230} The first was ensuring equal access to education for men and women, and the declaration outlined specific ways to do so. The second objective was to eradicate illiteracy amongst women. The next objective was to create proper vocational education training for women so they could be prepared to enter the labor market as well as men. The subsequent two objectives outlined how non-discriminatory educational curricula should be built, as well as which resources must be allocated to ensure this could be done. The final objective was to promote the importance of education for women for the future. These objectives, with more specific means of achievement, are vital to ensure the equality of women’s education on a worldwide basis.

Over the next few years, the UN kept working on documents which would help provide women with rights, specifically within the fields of education and work. One document that was heavily linked to many of the educational bills was the Measures Taken and Progress Achieved in the Promotion of Women and Political Participation, adopted by the UN General Assembly in July of 2013. This document focused on the importance of women’s education leading to women’s political participation.

The initial analysis of women’s engagement in politics stated that it had been fairly stagnant: “While some progress has been achieved over the past three decades, women remain marginalized from political decision-making in every region of the world.”\textsuperscript{231} The analysis also stated that women are much less likely to vote in elections than their male counterparts. Part of the reason the study claimed this occurred was because of a lack of civic education, specifically for women.\textsuperscript{232} This study also mentioned the importance of collecting data aggregated on gender to ensure there is a clearer understanding of how this factor determines political engagement.\textsuperscript{233} This, combined with the solution of ensuring that laws are amended to get rid


\textsuperscript{229} Ibid,


\textsuperscript{232} Ibid,

\textsuperscript{233} Ibid,
of any blatant sexism within them, will allow for women's civic engagement to increase, and will give women a larger voice in political discussions.

Over the past few years, women's education has become an increasingly high priority for the UN. Recently, the UN Women Strategic Plan for 2018-2021 was finalized, stating specific means to improve the quality of life for women internationally. In accordance with the previous document mentioned, this plan stated the need for women to be involved in political discussions and decision-making. Furthermore, this strategic plan emphasized the importance of closing the educational gap in order to close the economic gap between men and women. Finally, the plan suggested more direct means for narrowing the education gap between men and women, such as giving grants and additional educational opportunities to women.

One of the most important goal-oriented documents produced by the UN is the Sustainable Development Goals for 2030. In 2015, UN Women agreed upon a set of goals that they believed were noble yet achievable in order to create progress towards gender equality. Goal 4 was focused around ensuring quality and equal educational opportunities for all children. The goal also consisted of many targets, which more specifically addressed the issue. One example of a target was for nearly every adult by 2030, regardless of gender, to be literate and attain numeracy. Another target specified that all children should receive a quality primary and secondary education, regardless of any identifiers, including gender. With these goals in mind, the UN can make significant progress in ensuring improved education for women throughout the world.

235 Ibid,
236 Ibid,
238 Ibid,
**Possible Solutions**

While many UN documents state goals for ensuring gender equality through equal education, generating solutions to do so is often a more difficult task. As has already been established, women’s education is a fundamental part of ensuring a better society, not only for men but also for women.\(^{239}\) It is very important for women to be in early schooling, as it betters the future for women everywhere. Furthermore, it is beneficial for men, as young boys will benefit from learning from their female peers in class. This will also lead to more gender diversity in secondary schooling and higher education. Education is the key for a prosperous and rewarding life, and it benefits the world if women are given that key as well as men.

One of the most important topics to address is providing equal early education to girls and boys.\(^{240}\) Oftentimes, girls are not given educational opportunities at an early age because their parents choose to send only their male children to school while their female children work.\(^{241}\) Providing financial aid to families who send their female children to school may be a way of preventing this problem. Another potential idea could be providing families with multiple children greater food stipends assuming all their children are sent to school.\(^{242}\) Because of the previously stated importance of early education for women, delegates are encouraged to be particularly thoughtful and creative to come up with an innovative solution that will ensure that all girls and boys are able to receive a quality primary education.

By the time girls would enter secondary school, many are pulled out for a variety of reasons. Oftentimes, child marriage prevents women from receiving an education.\(^{243}\) While this committee cannot entirely eliminate child marriage as it is an entire issue of its own, suggesting a reduction of childhood marriage should be a priority. Another reason why women often do not receive a


\(^{241}\) Ibid,

\(^{242}\) Ibid,

secondary education is because of familial deaths.\textsuperscript{244} Oftentimes, when the mother of a family dies, the eldest daughter of the family will be pulled out of school to assume the responsibilities the mother previously had.\textsuperscript{245} Hence, reducing the familial needs that occur when a parent dies will help reduce the number of girls pulled out of school.

Women receive higher educational degrees at a much lower rate than men for a few reasons that can be addressed. The first issue is representation.\textsuperscript{246} Oftentimes, women do not necessarily know of other women who have received a higher educational degree, suggesting this is a moderately cyclical problem. By creating a mentorship program for highly achieving girls, these girls will have the confidence and guidance to attain higher educational degrees.\textsuperscript{247} Furthermore, it is essential that women be granted specific scholarships to increase female enrollment in higher educational programs.\textsuperscript{248} Oftentimes, families will prioritize the higher education of their male children over their female children, so such scholarships stand to help reduce the global effect of low female enrollment.

Education is a necessity for many facets of life, but it is arguably most important for job attainment and retention. Unfortunately, there is a societal expectation that a conventional family has a husband who works a job while there is a wife who takes care of the home.\textsuperscript{249} Firstly, it must be acknowledged that household work is still work, and women often take on additional roles in the house even when they work a job outside the home. Secondly, women should be able to aspire to a career just as men are able to. In order to ensure this happens, higher education is often very important. Furthermore, women oftentimes face discrimination in the hiring process, which should be eliminated.\textsuperscript{250} Delegates should consider creating work programs that coexist with mentorship programs that will give women the resources they need to work any career they choose.

Another issue that delegates must target is the issue of female illiteracy. More than 2/3 of the world’s illiterate population is female, which is a result of the aforementioned educational gap.\textsuperscript{251} In order to reduce female illiteracy, the committee must focus on improving access to primary schools for girls, but also allowing for adult women to receive literacy training. Hence, a possible solution would be to create day schools for illiterate mothers to go to while their children are at

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{244} Ibid,
\item \textsuperscript{245} Ibid,
\item \textsuperscript{247} Ibid,
\item \textsuperscript{248} Ibid,
\item \textsuperscript{250} Ibid,
\end{itemize}
school. Being literate will greatly help these mothers, as they will also be able to do more for their children with newfound literacy.

A major facet of women’s education is S.T.E.M. education for women. The S.T.E.M. fields (science, technology, engineering, and math) are often considered to be fields for men, as they require an immense amount of quantitative and technical thinking. Women are more than capable of entering and innovating within these fields, but are often discouraged from doing so. Hence, this committee should look at methods of improving the number of girls interested in joining the S.T.E.M. fields. In addition to that, there should be specific grants given to women interested in joining the S.T.E.M. fields, which would help reduce the gender gap. Mentorship for women in S.T.E.M. is also vital, as giving girls role models to help them navigate the fields will greatly improve their chances of success in S.T.E.M.

Representation is one of the most cited reasons women do not achieve as well as men in many educational sectors. Representation will be naturally increased as more women break glass ceilings and enter male dominant fields. However, to create a more immediate change, it is on the job of the media to change how they depict women. Women on television are often seen as submissive and unintelligent. Since young children often consume television, young boys and girls can begin to believe that women are naturally less intelligent and worthy of education than men. This committee should recognize and address the role media has in shaping educational paths of young girls.

While women generally have less access to education than men, location often further worsens the issue. In wealthy urban cities, for the most part, young girls and boys tend to receive similar levels of education. However, in poorer rural areas, girls are often left behind at an early age. Hence, this committee must devise plans that make educating young people in rural areas easier to ensure the female populations in these areas do not fall behind on their education. Furthermore, rural areas tend to have more conservative views of gender roles, meaning that

252 Ibid,
253 Ibid,
255 Ibid,
257 Ibid,
259 Ibid,
261 Ibid,
girls are less likely to receive an education in those areas. This committee must understand the necessity of regional and geographic solutions for this multifaceted issue.

Women’s education is an incredibly important and complex topic that this committee is privileged with discussing. Because of geographical factors, many countries will have different priorities when reducing the gender gap. For example, poorer nations will often need to provide primary schools for everyone, and reduce child pregnancies and child marriage as a first step. Other nations will need to eliminate workplace discrimination and work on representation so that women’s education leads to more successful women in the workforce. It is important for UNESCO to also improve the quality of female education, and not simply focus on gender parity. Hence, it is imperative for this committee to generate creative solutions that are highly efficient in increasing the accessibility and the quality of women’s education worldwide.

262 Ibid,
Bloc Positions

East Asia & The Pacific

Within the region of East Asia & The Pacific, gender parity has nearly been achieved in each country for primary school education. As of 2012, Papua New Guinea was the only country in the region that had gender disparities at the expense of girls. Furthermore, girls within the region tend to do better in school than boys do. The rate at which girls drop out of school is much lower than that of boys during young ages, and, primary school aged girls are more likely to achieve literacy than boys their age.

While gender parity has been achieved on the whole for primary school education, there are certain factors which often lead to disparities based on gender. For example, wealthy boys and girls in Laos receive educations at nearly identical rates. However, girls in extreme poverty within the country are 30% less likely to receive an education than boys in similar financial situations. Furthermore, girls within rural regions of East Asia and the Pacific tend to receive educations at much lower rates than boys within those regions. Literacy was also lower for rural girls than it was for rural boys, even though more girls in the overall region (rural and urban combined) are literate than boys in the region.

The region has also seen many difficulties with creating gender parity within educational fields for secondary educations. While some countries have achieved gender parity, many have not. It is vital that each country in this bloc works to both recognize some of the ways gender parity has been achieved within its borders, and to identify some steps to improve the situation going forward. Furthermore, gender equality has struggled within this bloc’s region, as gender based violence is still heavily present within schools. Both boys and girls within this bloc face gender-based violence in schools at an alarming rate.

Eastern Europe & Central Asia

In Eastern Europe and Central Asia, gender parity of education has been achieved for young children, but has not been translated to higher education and the labor market. All the nations
within this region had achieved full gender parity for primary education.\textsuperscript{269} This has been true for nearly every nation in the region since 1999. Furthermore, gender parity has nearly been achieved for all countries within the region for secondary education as well. This has been a more recent phenomenon, especially within Turkey.\textsuperscript{270}

While gender parity is certainly important to create gender equality within education, it is not all that is needed. It is important for these regions to ensure gender equality within education by ensuring there is a gender-sensitive learning environment.\textsuperscript{271} For example, in Georgia and many other countries in the region, it has been shown that there exists a great gender-bias within textbooks against girls. While donations have been made by outside organizations and benefactors to limit this bias, there is still much work to do.\textsuperscript{272}

With regards to educational success, it has been shown that girls within the region tend to do much better than boys on reading and writing exams.\textsuperscript{273} However, boys were generally slightly outperforming girls within mathematics and science in the region. This is one possible explanation for why men are overrepresented within STEM fields for college-level education and higher.\textsuperscript{274} Furthermore, only 23\% of engineering students within the region are women, which is a cause for concern.\textsuperscript{275} This could be linked to gender expectations that are placed for women within the region. Hence, moving forward, increased STEM representation for women is a necessity in the region.

**Latin America & The Caribbean**

Latin America & The Caribbean are heavily affected by gender disparities within education levels for all age groups of children. At a young age, women and men have different levels of accomplishment in different subjects. Young boys tend to do much better in math assessments than girls, and the difference between their successes tends to grow as they get older.\textsuperscript{276} In contrast, young girls tend to do much better in literacy than young boys. This is seen as one of the biggest reasons that young boys are more likely to drop out of school before grade five than girls.\textsuperscript{277}


\textsuperscript{270} Ibid,

\textsuperscript{271} Ibid,

\textsuperscript{272} Ibid,

\textsuperscript{273} Ibid,

\textsuperscript{274} Ibid,

\textsuperscript{275} Ibid,


\textsuperscript{277} Ibid,
It is worth noting that major progress has been made in achieving educational gender equality within the region over the past fifteen years. This progress has led to an increase in literacy and mathematical skills for girls within the region. However, women in the region are still not receiving nearly the same employment opportunities as men. This is partially because of the lack of women receiving degrees in STEM fields, which are often seen as a prerequisite to many high paying jobs. Hence, countries within the region should focus on increasing female representation within STEM.

**Middle East & North Africa**

While the Middle East and North Africa are two regions that are often criticized for their treatment of women, within early education, girls tend to be represented just as well as boys. Both these regions have near full gender parity for early education. Furthermore, there is universal primary education for nearly all boys and girls in the region.

With regards to testing, this region is actually unique in that young girls tend to have more success in math than young boys. For kids between fourth grade and eighth grade, girls receive higher test scores on math than boys. Also, in line with global trends, girls do better with reading and writing than boys in the region. Nonetheless, while women tend to do better in schooling, this does not translate into the workforce. The region is notorious for some of the biggest gender divides within the workforce and political participation.

While education does not directly correspond to work opportunities for all men in the world, there is usually a positive correlation between education and employment rates. However, within the Middle East and North Africa, women with higher levels of education tend to hold lower employment levels than women with lower education levels, which is not true of men. This occurs because of workplace discrimination, which prevents women from attaining high-paying jobs. In addition, most women within the region tend to work in the public sector, as there is a lot of discrimination within the private sector. Hence, while there are still some educational disparities between men and women within the region – especially when it comes to higher education – looking at how one's education prepares them for work is essential for countries in the region.

---

278 Ibid,
279 Ibid,
281 Ibid,
282 Ibid,
285 Ibid,
Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) is a coalition of 36 countries that span across the world. The OECD generally consists of wealthier nations, which attempt to hold each other to certain moral standards. While not technically part of the OECD, Brazil, India, and the People’s Republic of China are also key contributors to the organization. With those three nations included, these 39 countries hold over 80% of the world’s total wealth, and are major players in dictating the future for the world.

The OECD has prided itself on taking socially progressive stances on issues for the betterment of everyone in the world. Unsurprisingly, the OECD has a fairly positive track record with protecting women’s rights. However, the member countries still certainly have many issues with regards to sexism in their countries. Furthermore, while there have been efforts at reducing disparities within educational levels of boys and girls, the gap has far from dissipated.

Countries within the OECD will have two primary goals for this topic. The first of these goals is the global betterment of women’s education. These countries should generate solutions for how they can help the status of women’s education in poorer regions, or places with more blatant discrepancies in education based on gender. Secondly, these countries should also focus on improving the state of women’s education within their own countries. According to the Secretary General of the OECD, “Even when boys and girls are equally proficient in mathematics and science, their attitudes towards learning and aspirations for their future are markedly different – and that has a significant impact on their decisions to pursue further education and their choice of career.” According to data from the OECD, female children tend to do better in literacy skills over mathematical skills, demonstrating representation often discourages young girls from achieving in math. Hence, the OECD should focus on improving the representation and social stigmas about women, in order for girls to be able to reach their full potential.

South Asia

In the South Asian region, there has been tremendous progress in providing young girls with education. Girls are receiving access to primary schooling and secondary schooling at fairly similar rates to boys. As a matter of fact, in Sri Lanka, young girls often have more access to education and achieve more success within their early education. However, this stems from a new problem: young boys in the area are often dropping out of school to work at very young

287 Ibid,
289 Ibid,
 Nonetheless, this advantage young girls have often dissipates when they enter college age, as men occupy college positions fare more than women within the region.

South Asia has seen recent growth in women’s educational rights, but still has a long way to go. According to a report from a British governmental organization, there are still “shockingly low” numbers of women receiving an education within the region. Furthermore, while the number of women receiving university degrees has increased within the region, those numbers have not been reflected in senior leadership roles in the workforce. Hence, while women are gaining the potential to occupy high paying jobs, the jobs are often not offered to women.

Over the past ten years, the percentage of women receiving a university degree in India (the region’s largest country) has doubled from 10% to 20%. However, only 3% of the vice-chancellors who work in Universities are female, meaning women are not well represented within the educational field. Within the region, there have been debates about creating more women’s colleges in order to provide education as well as professorship roles and administrative roles to women in order to bridge the divide. However, critics have argued that by doing so, women will face further discrimination, as male-dominant institutions may not respect degrees or accolades from these universities.

**Sub-Saharan Africa**

Within the developing world, Sub-Saharan Africa has some of the lowest rates of education for children, regardless of gender. With over 20% of kids between the ages of six and eleven being out of school, there is certainly a need for more schools within the region. Furthermore, nearly 60% of kids between the ages of fifteen and seventeen are out of school, with most of them being girls. Due to poverty within the region, these numbers have remained relatively stagnant in the past few years.

While most Sub-Saharan African countries have laws mandating that children attend primary and secondary schools, there are a few factors, which prevent this from occurring. One of the biggest ones is proximity to schools. Many children do not have schools within a walking distance

---

293 Ibid,
295 Ibid,
296 Ibid,
297 Ibid,
298 Ibid,
300 Ibid,
from their house, so their parents choose not to send them to school. That, paired alongside extreme poverty, oftentimes encourages kids, regardless of gender, not to attend school.

Girls also face a unique set of problems apart from boys. In the region, over 40% of girls get married before they turn eighteen, and they are usually pulled out of school after marriage. Furthermore, child marriage is a cyclical problem, as young girls with young mothers often end up in situations in which they marry early. Young girls in the region also face underage pregnancies very regularly. In fourteen Sub-Saharan countries, between 30 and 51 percent of girls give birth before they turn eighteen. Hence, schools must offer education to young girls on how to avoid unwanted pregnancies, as many girls who are pregnant or married are not allowed to attend to school within the region.

301 Ibid,
303 Ibid,
304 Ibid,
Glossary

Child pregnancies: When a girl under the age of 18 becomes pregnant, it is classified as a child pregnancy. These pregnancies will often prevent girls as young as 12 from receiving the rest of their secondary education.

Cyclical role: Many of the discrepancies around women’s education exist cyclically, meaning an issue is likely to repeat itself and linger throughout many generations.

Early childhood education: Early childhood education typically is used to refer to the education kids receive between the ages of three and six. This education is very formative for a child’s communicative skills.

Educational disparities: Refers to the differences that sub-groups of people have based on a common characteristic. Characteristics can range from gender to the region that people are from.

Discrimination: The unjust treatment of a person or group of people based on a common identity trait. Discrimination against women seeking an education is very common throughout the world.

Gender Representation: Gender representation literally means how well represented a gender is within a specific field. The concept that women are underrepresented in areas speaks volumes to discrimination against women. However, representation is very important because when women are not represented in a certain field, it teaches young girls that they do not belong in that field.

Higher education: Education beyond high school, usually referring to college or university education. In parts of the world, women receive higher education at much lower rates than their male peers.

Literacy: The ability to read and write in a language. Literacy rates vary between men and women. Nearly two-thirds of all illiterate adults are women.

Numeracy: The ability to understand and work with numbers. Numeracy is vital for everyday life of both men and women.

Primary school: Primary school refers to the education children usually receive between the ages of seven and twelve. In the U.S. and Canada, it is often dubbed as elementary school.
Primary school is when kids gain literary and numeric proficiency, and gain many important social skills.

**Stagnation**: A state of lack of growth or change. In this guide, the term specifically refers to the ratio of illiteracy between men and women, which has not changed over the past twenty-years.

**Secondary education**: Secondary education refers to all the education that takes place between primary school and university. Kids usually receive their secondary education between the ages of thirteen and eighteen.

**Second-class citizen**: A person belonging to a minority social or political group whose rights and opportunities are less than those of the majority group. Women are often treated like second-class citizens of the world.

**STEM fields**: Fields contained within the sciences, technology, engineering, or math. While these fields are often very lucrative and important, many women do not consider careers in STEM because they are very heavily male-dominant fields.

**Vocational education**: A type of education that prepares students to work a specific job. Vocational education is typically shorter than most higher-educational degrees, and is meant to translate into a stable job upon graduation.

**Workplace Discrimination**: The unfair treatment of employees based on prejudices.
Bibliography


